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A VIEW FROM THE ROAD

by Paul Rademacher
TMI Executive Director

Over the past few months I have had the privilege of meeting with groups of our program graduates in Atlanta, Georgia; Santa Fe, New Mexico; Greenville, South Carolina; Sedona, Phoenix, and Tucson, Arizona; and Miami, Fort Myers, Tampa, Orlando, and Jacksonville, Florida, as well as Chicago, Illinois. Soon I will be traveling to other major cities on both our East and West coasts. I was also able to sit down for conversations with our professional members and our Board of Advisors during the 21st Professional Seminar held in March of this year.

The purpose of these meetings is to hear what the TMI family has to say about our collective future. It is also to explore the potential enthusiasm for creating local chapters of The Monroe Institute.

If there is one thing that has struck me in my travels so far, it is this: TMI has influenced so many lives so dramatically that there is enormous passion for what we do. Our graduates genuinely care about the Institute and want to see our work expand in its scope and impact. It is immensely gratifying to know that so much goodwill has been established through the years.

Because of that enthusiasm for our work, I have been receiving countless ideas for our future. Even at this point, it is more than we can act on. Knowing this would be the case, I decided from the outset to look for consistent suggestions rather than isolated ideas. These shared themes would become the basis of our vision.

What follows is an interim report on a few of those gradually emerging themes. Bear in mind that this is a work in progress, subject to change as future input is received.

I am pleased to say, however, that we have already begun work on some of these ideas.

- **Bring back the *GATEWAY OUTREACH* program.** A great many people want the OUTREACH program to be revived and reinvigorated because it gives a taste of the TMI magic in a less costly and less time-consuming format. But there is also a groundswell of interest from new people in becoming trainers as well. We have been very fortunate to be able to hire veteran *OUTREACH* and residential trainer Carol Sabick, who has agreed to move from Spain to Virginia and is already making plans for a new training program before the end of this year.

• **Update our Internet presence.** There have been many suggestions to increase our use of the Internet to attract a younger generation, to enhance communications, to provide discussion forums, to assimilate and disseminate information, to provide RSS* feeds, to deliver online programs, to streamline our application process, to deliver our newsletter, to better access research projects, to take advantage of YouTube, MySpace, and other social media, to offer recorded interviews, to disseminate TMI-produced articles and research, etc. To this end we have recently hired an Internet service company to examine what we have been doing and to steer us into a vastly updated future. We hope to have this new “up to the minute” Web version up and running by early fall.

• **Create ongoing community.** For many, there is a feeling of loss when returning from one of the residential programs. To move from the precious group energy of the Institute to the isolation of everyday life is difficult, to say the least. Former program participants have a real desire to find a way to reconnect on a more consistent basis. As I said above, this is one reason for my travels—to gauge the enthusiasm for local chapters. In some places that enthusiasm has been high. But there have also been suggestions to create community in other ways: by using our database more effectively to connect people in a given area, by creating geographically oriented Web conversations, and by finding ways to put new graduates in touch with support groups in their area.

• **Ramp up our research effort.** For over twenty years, Skip Atwater has been our director of research. After Laurie Monroe’s passing, Skip moved into the positions of president and treasurer of our corporation. We are currently in the process of interviewing for a new research director, who will determine the direction and scope of future studies at TMI. In addition, we have been approached by several institutions for collaborations. We are also laying the groundwork for creating an endowment that will help to fund upcoming research. To assist us with this effort we have hired longtime residential trainer and TMI associate Karen Malik to coordinate contacts with other organizations and to explore options for fund-raising and planned giving.

• **Create programs that cost less time and money.** There has been much interest in more weekend programs both on campus and off campus. Teleseminars, webinars, online programs, discussion forums with trainers, conferences, interactive Web experiences, and more have all been suggested. As I mentioned above, much of this will be offered through our new Web site. But we are also working on another aspect of our educational programming—the ability to offer continuing education units (CEUs). These initiatives are projected to be in place within the next year.

• **Offer programs targeted to specific needs.** There have been many suggestions for highly targeted programs that could meet the needs of a much broader population and focus on meditation, stress reduction, chronic pain management, learning enhancement, cancer-related

issues, and yoga practice. Addressing these areas could provide a steady stream of income from a demographic that might not otherwise be interested in our more advanced programs. There has also been interest in creating collaborative programs with other individuals and organizations such as Deepak Chopra, Bruce Moen, The Institute of HeartMath®, the International Association for Near-Death Studies (IANDS), and the Omega Institute.

As you can see, we are receiving terrific input. And the process is just beginning!

For those of you who have been kind enough to contribute your ideas, let me express my heartfelt thanks. For those of you I have yet to visit, won't you join me when I come to your area and make your voice heard? Your contribution is essential to our mission of developing human consciousness.

Hope to see you soon!

Paul Rademacher, Executive Director

* RSS refers to Really Simple Syndication, a Web-based way to automatically distribute specific information—the latest in consciousness research, for instance—to a group of subscribers.

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